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Where Research Meets Business

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Where research meets business

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INNOVATION PROFILE: Dublin Institute of Technology:ON TUESDAY next week, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) is throwing open its doors to show off its outstanding industry-focused research in areas such as environment and health, information and media technologies, novel materials, and culture and enterprise. Innovation@DIT – Where science meets industry takes place in DIT Aungier Street and is aimed at highlighting the commercial opportunities offered by the intellectual property created by DIT researchers.

The institute has a strong track record in research, according to DIT director of research and enterprise Prof Ellen Hazelkorn. “We are regularly cited among the top 3 per cent of higher education institutions internationally for research and innovation,” she points out. “Also, one in every five commercial licences generated by Ireland’s higher education sector in 2011 was secured by DIT through commercialising our research.”

She believes this high standing is not all that surprising. “The focus of our research is very user inspired,” she explains. “It is goal-oriented research with strong scientific underpinnings. We are interested in research which will have a real impact on people’s lives whether that is in the nanotechnology, IT, health, environment, social or cultural space. We are solving real life problems, but this doesn’t mean that our research is very narrowly defined. It is just that we are operating more in the near rather than in the long term.”

And the institute’s reputation has been built over a long period with some major successes being recorded over the past decade, including a significant rise in the number and level of competitive awards nationally and internationally.

DIT researchers have already invented a range of new products including diagnostic tests for cancer; anti-bacterial surface materials mobile phone applications; and novel financial risk management tools. They have also conducted empirical research to support new policy interventions in areas such as early childcare education, health policy and entrepreneurship.

The DIT technology transfer centre Hothouse has sold almost 50 licences to companies such as Sony, Bausch and Lomb, Monaghan Mushrooms, Airvod, Bord Gais and General Paints and has helped more than 250 knowledge intensive start-up companies through its business start-up programme. Many of these companies leverage DIT research, consultancy and training, employ DIT graduates and students and have contributed more than 1,000 new high-paying jobs to the Dublin region.

These companies have also been very successful at raising finance and have won prestigious awards such as IBM Global Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2011 (Profitero) and the ICT Excellence Award 2012 for Best Start-up Company of the Year (TCAS).

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